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AG nominee Garland vows Capitol riot will be top priority

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Merrick Garland, President Joe Biden's attorney general nominee, vowed Monday to prioritize combating extremist violence and said his first focus would be on the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol as he sought to assure lawmakers that the Justice Department would remain politically independent on his watch.

A federal appeals court judge who was snubbed by Republicans for a seat on the Supreme Court in 2016, Garland appeared Monday before the Senate Judiciary Committee and is widely expected to sail through his confirmation process with bipartisan support. "The attorney general represents the public interest, particularly and specifically as defined by the Constitution and the statutes of the United States," Garland said. "I do not plan to be interfered with by anyone." Garland will inherit a Justice Department that endured a tumultuous era under Trump — rife with political drama and controversial decisions — and that faced abundant criticism from Democrats over what they saw as the politicizing of the nation's top law enforcement agencies.

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Judge Merrick Garland, nominee to be Attorney General, testifies at his confirmation hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Monday, Feb. 22, 2021 on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

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AG nominee Garland vows Capitol riot will be top priority

Continued from Front

"I have grown pretty immune to any kind of pressure, other than the pressure to do what I think is the right thing, given the facts and the law. That is what I intend to do as the attorney general, I don't care who pressures me in whatever direction," he said.

Early in the hearing, Garland faced questioning about his plans to handle specific investigations and politically sensitive cases, like the federal tax investigation involving Biden's son Hunter Biden, and the special counsel's inquiry started by William Barr, while he was attorney general, into the origins of the Trump-Russia investigation, which also remains open.

Garland said he had not spoken with Biden about the investigation into his son. He said he had agreed to the nomination as attorney general because the president had vowed that "decisions about investigations and prosecutions will be left to the Justice Department." Garland, though saying he was supportive of transparency and in publicly explaining Justice Department decision-making, declined to commit to making public the results of the Durham investigation. He said under questioning from Sen. Chuck Grassley, the committee's top Republican, that he had not spoken to Durham yet but had no reason to think that former Attorney General William Barr's decision to give Durham special counsel status to remain in his position was "not the correct decision." To date, Durham has interviewed officials from the FBI, Justice Department and the CIA regarding the early



Judge Merrick Garland, nominee to be Attorney General, is sworn in at his confirmation hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Monday, Feb. 22, 2021 on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

days of the Russia investigation, and has produced criminal charges against just one person — a former FBI lawyer who pleaded guilty to altering an email. Garland said "there were certainly serious problems" with applications for surveillance during the FBI's Russia investigation, and that he intended as attorney general to speak more deeply about the issue with the Justice Department's inspector general and with the FBI director.

"I am always concerned and have always been concerned that we be very careful about FISA," Garland said, using the acronym for the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. Garland's failed nomination to the Supreme Court wasn't far from lawmakers' minds', with the bitter partisan feelings over the 2016 confirmation battle apparent in the hearing room. Sen. Chuck Grassley, who was chairman of the panel at the time and carried

out GOP leader Mitch McConnell's directive to block Garland from the court, defended his role, saying he took a position and "stuck to it." He then criticized Democrats over their handling of Justice Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation. Still, he indicated he would be supportive of Garland. "I admire Judge Garland's public service," Grassley said. "Just because I disagreed with anyone being nominated didn't mean that I had to be disagreeable to that nominee."

Garland said his first briefing as attorney general would be focused on the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 and promised to provide prosecutors with whatever resources they need to bring charges in the cases. "I will supervise the prosecution of white supremacists and others who stormed the Capitol on January 6 — a heinous attack that sought to disrupt a cornerstone of our democracy: the peaceful transfer of

power to a newly elected government," Garland said in his opening statement. Biden's choice of Garland reflects the president's goal of restoring the department's reputation as an independent body. During his four years as president, Donald Trump insisted that the attorney general must be loyal to him personally, a position that battered the department's reputation. In his prepared remarks, Garland focused on prioritizing policing and civil rights to combat racial discrimination — he says America doesn't "yet have equal justice" — as well as confronting the rise in extremist violence and domestic terror threats and restoring the department's political independence after years of controversial decisions and turmoil.

"Communities of color and other minorities still face discrimination in housing, education, employment, and the criminal justice system; and bear the brunt of the

harm caused by pandemic, pollution, and climate change," Garland said.

As civil rights groups and activists push Biden, a death penalty foe, to take immediate action to halt federal executions after an unprecedented run of capital punishment during the Trump administration, Garland described his reservation about the death penalty and its impact. He said he believes it is likely the Biden administration could issue a moratorium on the death penalty after 13 federal executions were carried out in the final six months of the Trump administration. They were the first federal executions in nearly 20 years and became super-spreader events during the coronavirus pandemic.

Garland said the death penalty gives him "great pause" and is concerned about what he sees as the "almost randomness or arbitrariness of its application" and the "disparate impact" the death penalty has on Black Americans.

Garland is an experienced judge who held senior positions at the Justice Department decades ago, including as a supervisor in the prosecution of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, which led to the execution of Timothy McVeigh. But he is set to return to a department that is radically different from the one he left. His experience prosecuting domestic terrorism cases could prove exceptionally handy.

Garland held back tears as Sen. Cory Booker asked Garland about his family's history confronting hate and discrimination.

"I come from a family where my grandparents fled antisemitism and persecution. □

Supreme Court won't halt turnover of Trump's tax records

By JESSICA GRESKO

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a significant defeat for former President Donald Trump, the Supreme Court on Monday declined to step in to halt the turnover of his tax records to a New York state prosecutor.

The court's action is the apparent culmination of a lengthy legal battle that had already reached the high court once before.

Trump's tax records are not supposed to become public as part of prosecutors' criminal investigation, but the high court's action is a blow to Trump because he has long fought on so many fronts to keep his tax records shielded from view.

The ongoing investigation that the records are part of could also become an issue for Trump in his life after the presidency. Trump has called it "a fishing expedition" and "a continuation of the witch hunt — the greatest witch hunt in history."

The Supreme Court waited months to act in the case. The last of the written briefs in the case was filed Oct. 19. But a court that includes three Trump appointees waited through the election, Trump's challenge to his defeat and a month after Trump left office before issuing its order.



This Nov. 5, 2020 file photo, shows the Supreme Court in Washington.

Associated Press

The court offered no explanation for the delay, and the legal issue before the justices did not involve whether Trump was due any special deference because he was president. The court's order is a win for Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr., who has been seeking Trump's tax records since 2019 as part of an investigation. Vance, a Democrat, had subpoenaed the records from the Mazars accounting firm that has long done work for Trump and his businesses. Mazars has said it would comply with the subpoena,

but Trump, a Republican, sued to block the records' release.

Vance's office had said it would be free to enforce the subpoena and obtain the records in the event the Supreme Court declined to step in and halt the records' turnover, but it was unclear when that might happen. In a three-word statement, Vance on Monday said only: "The work continues."

Representatives for Trump did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The case the high court

ruled in involves a grand jury subpoena for more than eight years of Trump's personal and corporate tax records. Vance has disclosed little about what prompted him to request the records. In one court filing last year, however, prosecutors said they were justified in demanding the records because of public reports of "possibly extensive and protracted criminal conduct at the Trump Organization."

Part of the probe involves payments to two women — porn actress Stormy Daniels and model Karen

McDougal — to keep them quiet during the 2016 presidential campaign about alleged extramarital affairs with Trump. Trump has denied the affairs.

In July, the justices in a 7-2 ruling rejected Trump's argument that the president is immune from investigation while he holds office or that a prosecutor must show a greater need than normal to obtain the tax records.

Justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh, whom Trump nominated to the high court, joined that decision. It was issued before Trump's third nominee, Justice Amy Coney Barrett, replaced the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg on the court.

As part of its July decision, the high court returned the Vance case and a similar case involving records sought by Congress to lower courts. And the court prevented the records from being turned over while the cases proceeded.

Since the high court's ruling, in the Vance case, Trump's attorneys made additional arguments that his tax records should not be turned over, but they lost again in federal court in New York and on appeal. It was those rulings that Trump had sought to put on hold. □

Dominion Voting Systems sues 'MyPillow Guy' for \$1.3 billion

By STEVE KARNOWSKI and DAVID BAUDER

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Dominion Voting Systems filed a \$1.3 billion defamation lawsuit Monday against the founder and CEO of Minnesota-based MyPillow, saying that Mike Lindell falsely accused the company of rigging the 2020 presidential election.

The lawsuit filed in federal court in the District of Columbia alleges that Lindell ignored repeated warnings from Dominion, a voting technology company that has filed similar lawsuits against Donald Trump lawyers Rudolph Giuliani and Sidney Powell.

Dominion accuses Lindell of repeatedly telling what the lawsuit labels the "Big Lie" that the company used its technology to steal the election from Trump.

"No amount of money can repair the damage that's been done by these lies, which are easily disproved. Hundreds of documented audits and recounts have proven that Dominion machines accurately counted votes.

We look forward to proving these facts in a court of law," the lawsuit says. Lindell, known as the "MyPillow Guy" from his TV commercials, told The Associated Press that he welcomed the lawsuit and said the dis-

covery process will prove him right. "It's a very good day. I've been looking forward to them finally suing," said Lindell, who went to the White House to promote his theories in the final days of the Trump administration.

There was no widespread fraud in the election, which a range of election officials across the country including Trump's former attorney general, William Barr, have confirmed. Republican governors in Arizona and Georgia, key battleground states crucial to President Joe Biden's victory, also vouched for the integrity of the elections in their states. Nearly all the legal chal-

lenges from Trump and his allies were dismissed by judges, including two tossed by the Supreme Court, which includes three Trump-nominated justices. Lindell took umbrage at

being repeatedly accused in the lawsuit of telling the "Big Lie" — noting that the expression was coined by Adolf Hitler. "The Big Lie here is the big lie," Lindell said. "They're the big lie." □



In this March 30, 2020 file photo, My Pillow CEO Mike Lindell speaks in the Rose Garden of the White House in Washington.

Associated Press

Boeing: 777s with engine that blew apart should be grounded

By The Associated Press

Boeing has recommended that airlines ground all 777s with the type of engine that blew apart after takeoff from Denver this weekend, and most carriers that fly those planes said they would temporarily pull them from service.

The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration ordered United Airlines to step up inspections of the aircraft after one of its flights made an emergency landing at Denver International Airport Saturday as pieces of the casing of the engine, a Pratt & Whitney PW4000, rained down on suburban neighborhoods. None of the 231 passengers or 10 crew were hurt, and the flight landed safely, authorities said. United is among the carriers that has grounded the planes.

FAA Administrator Steve Dickson said in a statement Sunday that based on an initial review of safety data, inspectors "concluded that the inspection interval should be stepped up for the hollow fan blades that are unique to this model of engine, used solely on Boeing 777 airplanes."

Dickson said that would likely mean some planes would be grounded — and Boeing said they should be until the FAA sets up an inspection regime. Japan



In this image taken from video, the engine of United Airlines Flight 328 is on fire after experiencing "a right-engine failure" shortly after takeoff from Denver International Airport, Saturday, Feb. 20, 2021, in Denver, Colo.

ordered the planes out of service, according to the financial newspaper Nikkei, while noting that an engine in the same family suffered trouble in December.

Boeing said there were 69 777s with the Pratt & Whitney 4000-112 engines in service and another 59 in storage.

United had 24 of the planes in service; it is the only U.S. airline with the engine in its fleet, according to the FAA. Two Japanese airlines have another 32 that are being pulled while Asiana Airlines grounded nine, seven of which were in service, until Boeing establishes a plan to fix the problems.

Korean Air said it was discussing whether to ground 16 aircraft, six of which are in service.

"We are working with these regulators as they take actions while these planes are on the ground and further inspections are conducted by Pratt & Whitney," Boeing said in a statement issued Sunday, referring to American and Japanese regulators.

The engine maker said it was sending a team to work with investigators.

The emergency landing this past weekend is the latest trouble for Boeing, which saw its 737 Max planes grounded for more than

a year after two deadly crashes in 2019 and is suffering amid the huge reduction in air travel due to the coronavirus pandemic. The Max planes began returning to the skies late last year — a huge boost for the aircraft maker, which lost billions during the grounding because it has been unable to deliver new planes to customers.

Video posted on Twitter from Saturday's emergency showed the engine fully engulfed in flames as the plane flew through the air. Freeze frames from different video taken by a passenger sitting slightly in front of the engine and

Associated Press

also posted on Twitter appeared to show a broken fan blade in the engine. Passengers, who were headed to Honolulu, said they feared the plane would crash after an explosion and flash of light, while people on the ground saw huge chunks of the aircraft pour down, just missing one home and crushing a truck. The explosion, visible from the ground, left a trail of black smoke in the sky.

The U.S. National Transportation Safety Board said that two of the engine's fan blades were fractured and the remainder of the fan blades "exhibited damage." But it cautioned that it was too early to draw conclusions about what happened.

United says it will work closely with the FAA and the NTSB "to determine any additional steps that are needed to ensure these aircraft meet our rigorous safety standards and can return to service."

The NTSB said the cockpit voice recorder and flight data recorder were transported to its lab in Washington so the data can be analyzed. NTSB investigations can take up to a year or longer, although in major cases the agency generally releases some investigative material midway through the process. □

Rules planned to save right whales loom over lobster fishers



This photo provided by Anastasia State Park shows a baby whale that washed ashore at Anastasia State Park near St. Augustine, Fla., Saturday, Feb. 13, 2021.

Associated Press

By PATRICK WHITTLE

Associated Press

PORTRLAND, Maine (AP) — America's lobster fishery is getting close to the date when it will have to contend with new rules designed to try to save a species of whale from extinction.

The North Atlantic right whale numbers only about 360, and scientists have said the animal's small population of breeding females could spell doom for the species. The National Marine Fisheries Service is developing new rules to reduce the possibility of entanglement in fishing gear, which can kill the whales.

A court decision required the fisheries service to fi-

nalize the rules by May 31. The agency is on track to produce the final rules on time, said Jennifer Goebel, a spokesperson.

The whale protection rules will focus on lobster and crab fisheries in the Northeast by reducing the number of vertical lines in the water, the federal government has said. It will also modify seasonal restricted areas and make other changes, the government has said.

The coming restrictions have sparked a rancorous debate between environmentalists and lobster fishermen over the proper way to save the whale. Lobster

fishing groups have said overly restrictive rules could put them out of business.

The Maine Lobstermen's Association said the industry has a "long history of conservation of lobster resource and large whale protections."

Many environmentalists, meanwhile, have said the proposed rules don't go far enough.

"Ultimately the top line is we don't think it's enough to save the species," said Michaela Morris, oceans associate for Environment America. "They are not going to get us where we need to be if the rule is finalized as written right now." □

Israel offers compensation to families of missing children

By JOSEF FEDERMAN

Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — The Israeli government on Monday approved a plan to offer \$50 million in compensation to the families of hundreds of Yemenite children who disappeared in the early years of the country's establishment.

But the announcement received a cool reception from advocacy groups that said the government had failed to apologize or accept responsibility for the affair.

Stories about the missing children have circulated in Israel for years. Hundreds of newborn babies and young children of Jewish immigrants from Arab and Balkan countries, most of them from Yemen, mysteriously disappeared shortly after arriving in the country. Many families believe their children were taken away and given to childless couples of European backgrounds, both in Israel and abroad. Although previous inquiries have dismissed claims of mass abductions, the suspicions have lingered and contributed to a long-simmering fault line between Jews of European origin and those of Middle Eastern backgrounds.

"This is among the most painful affairs in the history of the state of Israel," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said. "The time has come for the families



In this July 11, 2016 file photo, Yemen born Jewish Israeli Yona Josef holds a photograph dated back to the 1940's of her and her father back in Yemen in her home in Raanana, Israel.

Associated Press

whose infants were taken from them to receive recognition by the state and government of Israel, and financial compensation as well."

Arriving from Arabic-speaking countries in the Middle East and North Africa after Israel's establishment in 1948, many Mizrahi, or Middle Eastern, immigrants were sent to shantytown transit camps and largely sidelined by the European, or Ashkenazi, leaders of the founding Labor party. This painful experience contributed to widespread Mizrahi support for the Likud party, now led by Netanyahu.

Among the immigrants

were more than 50,000 Yemenite Jews, often poor and with large families. In the chaos that accompanied their influx, some children died while others were separated from their parents.

But many say the reality was far more sinister, that the establishment kidnapped these children to turn them over for adoption by Ashkenazi families in the belief that they could give them a better life. In later years, families reported being mailed military induction notices and other documents for their supposedly "dead" children, raising more suspicions.

Three high-profile commissions dismissed the claims and found that most children died of disease in immigration camps. The final one, in 2001, said it was possible that some children were handed over for adoption by individual social workers, but not as part of a national conspiracy. However, citing privacy laws, it ordered the testimonies it collected be sealed for 70 years.

Under Monday's decision, the government will pay 150,000 shekels, or about \$45,000, to families in cases where it was determined a child had died but the family had not been properly

notified or where the burial site was not found.

Families where the fate of the child is unknown will receive 200,000 shekels, or about \$60,000.

In a statement, the government said it "expresses regret" and "recognizes the suffering of the families." But activist groups said the decision did not go far enough.

Amram, an advocacy group that has collected testimonies from some 800 affected families, said the decision failed to include an apology and was reached without proper dialogue with the families.

"Without this component, a process of correction and healing isn't possible," it said. "Amram repeatedly demands that the state of Israel take responsibility for the severe injustice."

Rafi Shubeli of "Forum Achai," an advocacy group that represented dozens of families, accused the government of imposing a solution on the families and failing to accept responsibility or say who caused their suffering.

He also said families who have not already filed claims would be unable to seek compensation and accused the government of refusing to disclose documents related to the affair.

"Our struggle will continue," he said. "This affair isn't going away." □

Fukushima nuclear plant operator: Seismometers were broken

By MARI YAMAGUCHI

Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — The operator of the wrecked Fukushima nuclear power plant said Monday that two seismometers at one of its three melted reactors have been out of order since last year and did not collect data when a powerful earthquake struck the area earlier this month.

The acknowledgement raised new questions about whether the company's risk management has improved since a massive

earthquake and tsunami in 2011 destroyed much of the plant.

The malfunctioning seismometers surfaced during a Nuclear Regulation Authority meeting on Monday to discuss new damage at the plant resulting from a magnitude 7.3 quake that struck the region on Feb. 13. Cooling water and pressure levels fell in the Unit 1 and 3 reactors, indicating additional damage to their primary containment chambers.

Regulatory officials asked

TEPCO at the meeting why it did not have seismological data from the Unit 3 reactor for Saturday's quake, and utility officials acknowledged that both of its seismometers had failed — one in July and the other in October — and had never been repaired.

TEPCO also said that seismometers at all but two of the reactor buildings that survived the 2011 disaster were submerged by water from the tsunami and have never been replaced.

During Monday's meeting,



This aerial photo shows the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant operated by Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) in Okuma town, Fukushima prefecture, northeastern Japan, on Feb. 14, 2021, a day after a strong earthquake.

Associated Press

regulatory officials said they were concerned about the declining water levels and pressure in the Unit 1 and 3 primary containment chambers because of the possibility that the quake had expanded the existing damage or opened new leakage paths, and urged the utility to closely check for any increased radiation levels in the ground water surrounding the reactor buildings.

TEPCO said no abnormality has been detected in water samples so far. □

Italian ambassador among 3 killed in attack on Congo convoy

By JEAN-YVES KAMALE and NICOLE WINFIELD
Associated Press

KINSHASA, Congo (AP) — The Italian ambassador to Congo, an Italian Carabinieri police officer and their Congolese driver were killed Monday when gunmen attacked a U.N. convoy going to visit a school in eastern Congo, the Italian Foreign Ministry and residents said.

Luca Attanasio, Italy's ambassador to the country since 2017, Carabinieri officer Vittorio Iacovacci and their driver were killed, officials said.

Other members of the convoy were wounded and taken to a hospital, the World Food Program said. The ambush occurred as the convoy was traveling from Goma, Congo's eastern regional capital, to visit a WFP school project in Rutshuru, the U.N. agency said. The WFP said the attack occurred on a road that had been cleared previously for travel without security escorts, and it was seeking more information from local officials on the attack. Eastern Congo is home to my-



The Italian ambassador to Congo, Luca Attanasio, center, 5th from left, and his wife Zakia Seddiki, 5th from right, pose for a photo during a visit to the Sant'Egidio Community Dream center in Kinshasa, Congo, on Jan. 24, 2018.

riad rebel groups all vying for control of the mineral-rich Central African nation that is the size of Western Europe. The attack, a few kilometers north of Goma, was right next to Virunga National Park. North Kivu Gov. Carly Nzanzu Kasivita said the U.N. vehicles were hijacked by the attackers and taken into the bush. The Congolese army and park guards for Virunga National Park came to help

those who had been attacked, he said.

"There was an exchange of fire. The attackers fired at the bodyguard and the ambassador," the governor said, adding that the ambassador later died from his wounds.

Attanasio, a 43-year-old career diplomat, left behind a wife and three young children.

The attack occurred in the same area where two Brit-

ons were kidnapped by unidentified gunmen in 2018, said Mambo Kaway, head of a local civil society group. "The situation is very tense," he added.

More than 2,000 civilians were killed last year in eastern Congo in violence by armed groups whose brutal attacks have also displaced over 5.2 million people in what the U.N. calls one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

Associated Press

Marie Tumba Nzenza, Congo's minister of foreign affairs, sent her condolences and promised the Italian government that the Congolese government would do all it could to find those behind the killings.

Italian President Sergio Mattarella and Premier Mario Draghi also expressed their condolences to the victims' families. "The circumstances of this brutal attack are still unclear and no effort will be spared to shed light on what happened," Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio said.

Di Maio was flying from Brussels to Rome to meet with Draghi and to brief Italian lawmakers on the attack. The Rome prosecutors' office routinely leads investigations of Italians who are victims of crime abroad. A special Carabinieri investigative unit was headed to Kinshasa and expected to arrive Tuesday, Italian state TV reported. After serving in diplomatic roles in Switzerland, Morocco and Nigeria, Attanasio was assigned to the Italian Embassy in Kinshasa in September 2017. □

Sri Lankan bishops urge government to release blast inquiry

By KRISHAN FRANCIS
Associated Press
COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP) — Sri Lanka's Roman Catholic bishops said Monday that they are suspicious of the government's motives in not sharing the report of a presidential commission

of inquiry into Easter Sunday suicide bomb attacks in 2019 that killed more than 260 people, and instead appointing another committee to study it. The Rev. Winston Fernando, the head of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of

Sri Lanka, said the church was alarmed by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's decision last week to appoint a new six-member committee of government ministers to study the report without sharing it with the church or the attorney general for the prosecution of suspects.

"We have a lot of doubts about this whole process, the whole thing is getting delayed," Fernando told The Associated Press.

"If there are people involved, they want to protect them, I suppose, what else?" Fernando said, without elaborating.

He said the committee, comprising only members of the ruling coalition, was not balanced and its integrity was compromised by the inclusion of people who have other court cas-

es pending against them. The bomb attacks on April 21, 2019, were blamed on two local Muslim groups who had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group. The targets were two Roman Catholic churches, a Protestant church and people eating breakfast at three top tourist hotels.

A total of 171 people were killed in the Catholic churches.

A communication breakdown between the then president and prime minister that led to a lapse in security coordination was said to have enabled the attacks despite near-specific foreign intelligence warnings in advance.

Former President Maithripala Sirisena, who is now a coalition partner in the Rajapaksa government, and

former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe were among those questioned by the commission.

The archbishop of Colombo, Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, wrote to Rajapaksa earlier this month requesting a copy of the report and later warned that he would approach international church bodies for help if the government does not act on the report promptly.

The president's office said Monday that the new committee has been given a mandate to identify measures to be taken by various agencies including Parliament, the judiciary, the Attorney General's Department, security forces and intelligence services in implementing the presidential commission's recommendations. □



In this April 21, 2020 file photo, Sri Lankan Catholics priests stand at the entrance of St. Anthony's church, one of the sites of the 2019 Easter Sunday attacks, on the first anniversary of the deadly bombings in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

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Chinese loans to Latin America plunge as virus strains ties



In this March 30, 2020 file photo, Venezuela's Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza, wearing protective gloves as a preventive measure against the spread of the new coronavirus, holds a Venezuelan and Chinese flag as medical specialists and supplies arrive from China at the Simon Bolivar International Airport in La Guaira, Venezuela.

**By JOSHUA GOODMAN
Associated Press**

MIAMI (AP) — It seemed like a match made in finance heaven.

In 2010, China, its economy roaring and state companies looking to expand globally, set its eyes on Latin America, a region starved of capital but rich in natural resources the Asian giant lacked. The result: a record \$35 billion in state-to-state loans that year.

Fast forward a decade and the once-torrid relationship is starting to mature in ways that suggest China may be growing wary of its once do-no-wrong partner.

For the first time in 15 years, China's two biggest policy banks — the China Development Bank (CDB) and the Export-Import Bank of China — made no new loans to the region in 2020, capping a multi-year slump driven by Latin America's worsening economic slide. The data comes from a new report by the Inter-

American Dialogue, a Washington think tank, and Boston University's Global Development Policy Center, both of which have been tracking for years China's yuan diplomacy in Washington's backyard. China's growing economic and diplomatic influence in the region has worried U.S. policymakers, who have been at a loss to counter its rise. The task now falls to the Biden administration, which has warned that the Chinese footprint in the region is a national security threat. But with China having displaced the U.S. as the top trading partner of several South American nations, catching up will be no easy task.

Meanwhile, the U.S. may have fallen even farther behind during the pandemic, when China donated more than \$215 million in supplies — from surgical gloves to thermal imaging technologies — to allies in the region, according to the research. By com-

parison, the United States Agency for International Development and State Department has provided \$153 million. China also conducted clinical trials or plans to manufacture vaccines in five countries Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Peru.

"Without a doubt part of the region's COVID response has a Chinese face," said Rebecca Ray, a Boston University economist and one of the authors of the new report. "It's a missed opportunity for the U.S. but since the bottoming out of American manufacturing in the 1990s there's really no way to compete. Many of the same medical supplies China ships to Latin America we buy from China as well."

With borrowers squeezed, China has taken a hit. Last year, Ecuador negotiated to delay for a year nearly \$900 million in debt payments serviced by oil shipments. Venezuela by far the region's biggest bor-

rower is believed to have received a similar grace period.

At the same time, "With the region facing unprecedented challenges, China is unlikely to lend any more for now," said Margaret Myers, head of the Asia-Latin America program at the Dialogue. "Instead it has to grapple with its own problematic portfolio."

The slowdown in lending to Latin America reflects a broader, global pullback, as China turns inward to bolster its own recovery efforts amid the pandemic. The ruling Communist Party has lent billions of dollars to build ports, railways and other infrastructure across Asia to Africa, Europe and Latin America in order to expand China's access to

markets and resources. But Beijing has grown more cautious after some borrowers struggled to repay loans. Officials say they will examine projects and financing more carefully. The China Development Bank and the foreign ministry didn't respond to questions about the reasons for the decline in Chinese loans to Latin America.

Even though lending has dried up, Chinese buying of Latin America's soybeans, iron ore and other commodities remained robust, at an estimated \$136 billion. That's despite a sharp rise of China's purchases of American farm goods, a promise reached with the Trump administration to end a debilitating trade war. □

Associated Press

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LOCAL



Aruba's burrowing owl or Shoco

ORANJESTAD — Shoco or Aruban burrowing owl's population has greatly diminished and is now endangered, with estimates of less than 150 pairs remaining. Threats include over-development and the invasive boa constrictor. Efforts are being made to ensure that it does not go extinct.

The 'Shoco' was made one of Aruba's National Symbols on February 2012. It also appears on Aruba's Postal Stamps and Currency. The year 2012 was declared to be the year of the 'Shoco' and for the Aruban burrowing owl to be nominated as Aruba's National Bird. The island's terrestrial protected area, Parke Nacional Arikok, is also an important refuge where the population can recover and the staff is actively involved in conservation efforts.



Teaming up with Tierra del Sol

In 2016 Aruba Birdlife Conservation and National Park Aruba formed a partnership to rescue the Shoco from extinction. They searched for an international partner and invited the Global Owl Project to join in their endeavor. A plan was made and together they then approached Cisco Quant, General Manager of Tierra del Sol with the request to

partner in Aruba's first Shoco Conservation Project. A fundamental aspect of the Shoco Conservation Project entails offering the Shocos artificial burrows which are strategically placed at safe locations. Over a period of two years, 22 artificial burrows were placed at such safe locations around the Tierra del Sol Golf Course. And the good news is that the Shocos love their new arti-



ficial burrows. The partners agreed that the time had come to launch this unique project in November 2019.

Tierra del Sol was ready to serve as the primary example of the Aruba Shoco Conservation Project.

Our Governor Alfonso Boekhoudt is a profound nature lover who has taken an interest in the Shoco Conservation Project from day one. At that time the Governor paid an informal visit at Tierra Del Sol to be informed in detail on the progress made. During this visit he discovered that a pair of Shocos had moved in at Hole # 14, yes, at Tierra del Sol's signature golf hole! It goes without saying that it was this artificial burrow site which was chosen for the launch.

More homes for Shocos

As habitat is being lost to development and other human activities, the Shoco (*Athene cunicularia arubensis*) has to get creative

in finding new areas to dig burrows for nesting, often in places not considered ideal by people.

Shoco needs soft sand to dig tunnels in and now nests are frequently being found in piles of construction sand, alongside roads, and even in drainage pipes. Such places are not always safe places for Shoco owlets. To avoid dangerous situations it is best to relocate the owls by creating artificial nests in a nearby safe zone, allowing the Shoco to move voluntarily to the new location.

SV Racing Club Aruba (RCA) reached out to the Aruba National Park recently so they could assist in relocating two Shoco nests that were near a dilapidated wall in need of reconstruction. □

Sources: Aruba Birdlife Conservation & Aruba National Park




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Welcome to Tuscany Residence Aruba: Aruba's Luxury Residential Resort



NOORD — Tuscany Residence Aruba is found in one of the most popular neighborhoods of Aruba, close to the shopping and nightlife of Palm Beach, and best of all it is within walking distance of the finest white beaches and clear blue ocean. Tuscany Residence Aruba brings luxury living to a new level.

180 exclusive properties will be built suitable for everyone's wishes. The buildings varies greatly in layout and offers amazing views. You can choose from 2 or 3-story villas with a private pool and a rooftop terrace, condominiums, townhouses. Tuscany Residence Aruba enjoys an abundance of luxury amenities and services. Soon a new concept consisting of 18, 1 and 2-story water villas. Everything is aimed at providing homeowners and holiday makers of Tuscany Residence Aruba with a relaxing stay.

Dutch design

Tuscany Residence Aruba is a residence that is currently being built and will develop in the coming years into a luxury residential resort with various types of homes and many amenities such as swimming pools, restaurant, bar, offices, meeting rooms, gym, wellness and more. The combination of the beautiful Dutch modern international architecture and the Aruban palm trees creates a luxurious Aruban feeling and relaxed atmosphere in this resort. Tuscany Residence Aruba is the perfect choice for couples and families. Bas de Groot, Managing Director of Tuscany Residence Aruba adds, "We differ from traditional building, our design distinguishes itself." At 8 minutes' walk from Palm Beach, designed in a European style with high-quality materials, on property land and with buying possibilities from condos to townhouses to villas, Tuscany Residence is a dream comes true. "We just completed the community pool and the first villa. Eight townhouses are ready and three are still available. There is lots to see, you are invited. Our quality will convince you."

We take care of it all

De Groot adds, "Our project is in continuous construction which builds confidence. Aside of the town houses and villa you can see the community pool now, providing you with the idea of style and quality of our residence." He continues saying that maintenance, property management, rental program and safety are taken care of. "You can log in from abroad and manage your property for rental or view your administration." The great thing about Tuscany is that it offers everything equal to a resort but you do not need to wait for an elevator to bring you up, worry about parking space or noisy neighbors. "We have got space and different size offerings making this more a community feel rather than a packed condo building." He also emphasizes that the location is one of the best on Aruba as it is quiet and close to Palm Beach.



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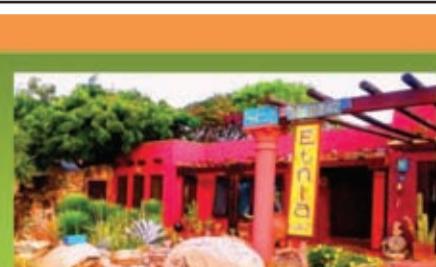
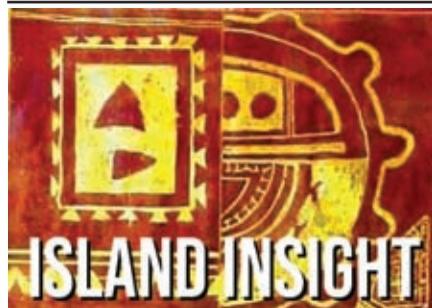
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Article by Etnia Nativa

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Etnia Nativa is close to high rise Hotels



How tourism started on Aruba

ORANJESTAD — When Lago Aruba Refinery, one of the world largest oil refineries back then, went over to the automatization of their refining-industry, layoffs began to rain so fast that an unemployment problem arose on Aruba. In order to widen the basis of our economic existence, the administration took various projects in hand.

The first of these was a greater concentration on Caribbean tourism which had soared since 1950. Plans were made to attract cruise ships to the Paardenbaai (Horses' Bay) in Oranjestad. The arrival of the first cruise ship of that time, The Trade Wind, calling port on February 1955, had become a historical event. Receptions and festivities had been organized. A welcome committee, consisting of Aruban girls dressed for the occasion in specially designed gowns, stood ready on the quay to guide the tourists to the Oranjestad shopping-center. Almost all cars on the island streamed to the harbor, traffic jams were caused, and one wondered whether the Aruban population were setting forth to see the



tourists or whether the tourists were here to see the island.

The 'Trade Wind' started up a new era in the history of the island's economy. Tourism dates back from the beginning of 1955. The Grace Line, whose freighters only used to call at our island before June 1956, since then has had their luxury liners head for Horses' Bay. Other lines followed. During the cruising-season the biggest tourist vessels were mooring our harbor. In 1956 a total of 3002 foreigners visited Aruba and in 1960 the number had risen to 13,125. Night-stays at hotels in those three years increased from 31,936 to 94,607. The hotels naturally were not able to cope with this sudden increase. Seeing this, Ch.J. Neme, who had built the Strand Hotel before in February 1957, opened the Hotel Basi Ruti on Palm Beach.

The construction of the first high rise hotel, Aruba Caribbean Hotel and Casino, attracted the rich and famous. It was beneficial for our island seeing that there was a yearly-increasing wave of sight-seers in the Caribbean area due to this building. In this manner, it was hoped that a considerable source of income would be opened up. To finance the hotel the Aruvén Company Inc. was founded, of which the island was the largest shareholder. In Venezuela the Venaruba Company Inc. was set up to collect funds. Other shareholders were banks, companies, and the

business world.

On July 1958, this hotel, whose building-expenses amounted to 8 million Antillean guilders, was opened. Palm Beach, which until then could only be reached by secondary roads, was connected with town and airfield by a boulevard. This boulevard, which had a construction cost of 1 1/3 million Antillean guilders, to which another 175.000 guilders should be added for the cost of illumination, was opened on May 1st, 1958. The coastal area meant to be a tourist resort is now of easy access.

In 1961 the quaint restaurant De Olde Molen (The Old Mill) was established here. A mill was purchased in the Netherlands and carried across the ocean for this purpose. Stay pending for part II of 'How tourism started on Aruba' next week Tuesday. □

To get to know a little more regarding Aruba's and its cultural origins we highly recommend you to book your participation in our cultural encounter session.

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Episode XCIII - 93

Microsoft, EU publishers seek Australia-style news payments

By KELVIN CHAN
AP Business Writer

LONDON (AP)— Microsoft is teaming up with European publishers to push for a system to make big tech platforms pay for news, raising the stakes in the brewing battle led by Australia to get Google and Facebook to pay for journalism.

The Seattle tech giant and four big European Union news industry groups unveiled their plan Monday to work together on a solution to "mandate payments" for use of news content from online "gatekeepers with dominant market power." They said they will "take inspiration" from proposed legislation in Australia to force tech platforms to share revenue with news companies and which includes an arbitration system to resolve disputes over a fair price for news. Facebook last week blocked Australians from accessing and sharing news on its platform, in response to the government's proposals, but the surprise move sparked a big public backlash and intensified the debate over how much power the social network has. Google, meanwhile, has taken a different tack by cutting



In this Wednesday, Feb. 3, 2021 file photo, the Microsoft company logo is displayed at their offices in Sydney.

Associated Press

payment deals with news organizations, after backing down from its initial threat to shut off its search engine for Australians.

The EU's internal market commissioner, Thierry Breton, expressed support for Australia, in the latest sign Facebook's move has backfired.

"I think it's very regrettable that a platform takes such decisions to protest against a country's laws," Breton told EU lawmakers. "It's up

to the platforms to adapt to regulators, not the other way around," he said, adding that what's happening in Australia "highlights an attitude that must change." Breton is leading the EU's sweeping overhaul of digital regulations aimed at taming the power of the big tech companies, amid growing concerns their algorithms are eroding democracy.

Microsoft is joining forces with two lobbying groups,

the European Publishers Council and News Media Europe, along with two groups representing European newspaper and magazine publishers, which account for thousands of titles. The company has expressed support for Australia's plans, which could help increase market share of its Bing search engine. European Union countries are working on adopting by June revamped copyright rules set out by the EU

executive that allow news companies and publishers to negotiate payments from digital platforms for online use of their content. But there are worries about an imbalance of bargaining power between the two sides and the group called for new measures to be added to the upcoming overhaul of digital regulations to address the problem. Publishers "might not have the economic strength to negotiate fair and balanced agreements with these gatekeeper tech companies, who might otherwise threaten to walk away from negotiations or exit markets entirely," the group said in a joint statement. Google and Facebook have resisted arbitration because it would give them less control over payment talks.

Facebook did not reply to a request for comment. Google said it already has signed hundreds of partnerships with news publishers across Europe, making it one of journalism's biggest funders and noted on Twitter that it's working with publishers and policymakers across the EU as member countries adopt the copyright rules into national legislation. □

Moet Hennessy buys 50% stake in Jay-Z's Champagne brand

By DEE-ANN DURBIN
AP Business Writer

Moet Hennessy is acquiring a 50% stake in rapper and entrepreneur Jay-Z's Champagne brand in an effort to up its cool factor and expand distribution. Terms of the deal, which was announced Monday, weren't released.

Armand de Brignac, known familiarly as Ace of Spades because of its distinctive label, is produced in France's Champagne region by a father and son who are 12th and 13th generation wine growers.

Jay-Z, whose real name is Shawn Carter, gave the brand a boost in 2006 when he featured one of their bottles in a music video after a public fallout



In this July 23, 2019, file photo, Jay-Z makes an announcement of the launch of Dream Chasers record label in joint venture with Roc Nation, at the Roc Nation headquarters in New York.

Associated Press

with Cristal, a rival brand. Carter accused Cristal of racism after an executive for the brand mused in an interview about whether partnering with a rapper

in 2019.

Moet Hennessy President and CEO Philippe Schaus said Armand de Brignac breaks barriers and reflects contemporary ideas of luxury, even as it supports historic Champagne-making traditions.

"We are incredibly proud to be partnering with them," Schaus said.

Carter said the partnership will help Armand de Brignac grow and flourish, noting Moet Hennessy's track record of developing luxury brands like Dom Perignon and Veuve Clicquot. Moet Hennessy is the wine and spirits division of luxury goods company LVMH.

"It is a partnership that has felt familiar the entire

time," Carter said.

Carter is one of several celebrities to profit from a partnership with an alcohol brand.

Actor George Clooney co-founded Casamigos, a tequila brand, in 2013. It was purchased by beverage giant Diageo in 2017 for \$700 million. Last year, Diageo also scooped up Aviation American Gin, a brand co-owned by actor Ryan Reynolds, for \$610 million.

Actor Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson recently released a tequila brand called Teramana. Singer John Legend has his own wine label, LVE. And in 2018, singer Bob Dylan launched the Heaven's Door whiskey brand. □

What's safe after COVID-19 vaccination? Don't shed masks yet

By LAURAN NEERGAARD

AP Medical Writer

You're fully vaccinated against the coronavirus — now what? Don't expect to shed your mask and get back to normal activities right away.

That's going to be a disappointment, if not a shock, to many people.

In Miami, 81-year-old Noremi Caraballo got her second dose on Tuesday and is looking forward to seeing friends, resuming fitness classes and running errands after nearly a year of being extremely cautious, even ordering groceries online.

"Her line is, 'I'm tired of talking to the cats and the parrots,'" said her daughter Susan Caraballo. "She wants to do things and talk to people."

But the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention hasn't yet changed its guidelines: At least for now, people should follow the same rules as everybody else about wearing a mask, keeping a 6-foot distance and avoiding crowds — even after they've gotten their second vaccine dose. Vaccines in use so far require two doses, and experts say especially don't let your guard down after the first dose.

"You're asking a very logical question," Dr. Anthony Fauci, the top U.S. infectious disease expert, responded when a 91-year-old Califor-



In this Feb. 19, 2021, file photo, people wait in line at a 24-hour, walk-up COVID-19 vaccination clinic hosted by the Black Doctors COVID-19 Consortium at Temple University's Liacouras Center in Philadelphia.

Associated Press

nia woman recently asked if she and her vaccinated friends could resume their mah-jongg games.

In that webcast exchange, Fauci only could point to the CDC's recommendations, which so far are mum about exceptions for vaccinated people getting together. "Hang on," he told the woman, saying he expected updates to the guidelines as more people get the coveted shots.

What experts also need to learn: The vaccines are highly effective at preventing symptomatic CO-

VID-19, especially severe illness and death — but no one yet knows how well they block spread of the coronavirus.

It's great if the vaccine means someone who otherwise would have been hospitalized instead just has the sniffles, or even no symptoms. But "the looming question," Fauci said during a White House coronavirus response briefing last week, is whether a person infected despite vaccination can still, unwittingly, infect someone else.

Studies are underway to find out, and hints are starting to emerge. Fauci pointed to recent research from Spain showing the more coronavirus an infected person harbors — what's called the viral load — the more infectious they are. That's not surprising, as it's true with other illnesses.

Some preliminary findings from Israel have suggested people infected after the first vaccine dose, when they're only partially protected, had smaller viral loads than unvaccinated people who got infected. That's encouraging if the findings hold up. Israel has vaccinated a large fraction of its population and scientists worldwide are watching how the outbreak responds as those in-

oculations increase.

Also critical is tracking whether the vaccines protect against new, mutated versions of the virus that are spreading rapidly in some countries, added Dr. Walter Orenstein, an infectious disease expert at Emory University. He's been vaccinated and is scrupulously following the CDC guidelines.

There are practical reasons. "It's hard to tell who got vaccinated and who didn't if you're just walking around the grocery store," noted University of Pennsylvania immunologist E. John Wherry.

And experts like Wherry get asked, repeatedly: Yes, there are rules for being in public, but what's safe for Grandma to do at home, with family or close friends, after she's vaccinated?

Not everyone's immune system is boosted equally from vaccines — so someone with cancer or the frail elderly may not get as much protection as a robust 70-something.

But most people should feel "more confident about going shopping, for example, or going to see your grandkids, or giving your daughter a hug," Wherry said.

That's because the chances of a fully vaccinated person getting seriously ill,

while not zero, are low.

"Friends coming over for dinner, we should still try to follow the guidelines," Wherry added. "You never know who is compromised, where the vaccine may not work as well."

What if the fully vaccinated are exposed to someone who's infected? The CDC did recently ease those rules: No quarantine as long as the vaccinated person shows no symptoms and it's been at least two weeks but not longer than three months since their second dose.

Getting on an airplane? Vaccinated or not, the CDC still urges essential travel only.

International travel is an even tougher prospect. Expect countries that already have different quarantine and test requirements to come up with varying post-vaccination guidelines — especially since multiple types of vaccines, some better proven than others, are used around the world. There's also the concern about carrying those worrisome mutations from one country to another.

Stay tuned for updates to the advice as more people get vaccinated. Meanwhile, don't underestimate how important it is for the vaccinated to feel less anxiety as they run errands or go to work while still following the public health measures, said Dr. Luciana Borio, a former Food and Drug Administration scientist.

Even with a trip to the grocery store, "there was always this anxiety about, 'Was that the contact that's going to make me infected?'" Borio said.

"That is a very powerful change in one's living situation." □

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

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| | 9 | 3 | | | 7 | | | 1 |
| 1 | | | 4 | | | 9 | | 6 |
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| 3 | | 1 | | | 2 | | | 7 |
| 8 | | | 7 | | | 5 | 4 | |

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In 'Minari,' harvesting an American dream

By JAKE COYLE

AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The riverbed, more than anything else, needed to be exactly right.

In Lee Isaac Chung's Arkansas-set family drama, "Minari," land is something more than a setting. It's a future. It's a dream. Jacob Yi (Steven Yeun) has moved his family to a wide-open Arkansas plot to farm the land and, hopefully, release him and his wife from years of toil at poultry plants. He tills it not for the area's typical crops but for vegetables common to Korean cooking that he believes will feed other Korean immigrants like himself. His mother-in-law (Youn Yuh-jung) also finds a gentle creek bed to grow minari, the leafy vegetable popular in Korea.

In Chung's film, the watery basin throbs with significance — a physical symbol of putting roots down, of Korean American harmony, of resiliency. At first, everywhere Chung looked, the soil was wrong, the flow not right. A location scout mentioned a place he had played as a child. Chung, in the midst of making a deeply personal story about his own upbringing, liked that connection.

Chung planted the spot with minari plants his father had been growing in Kansas City. The director had been too frightened to tell



Han Yeri, back row from left, Steven Yeun, director Lee Isaac Chung, and foreground from left, Youn Yuh-jung, Alan Kim, and Noel Cho pose for a portrait to promote the film "Minari" during the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah on Jan. 27, 2020.

Associated Press

his family he was making a film about them, so his borrowing of the minari was mysterious. It was trucked in crates to the Oklahoma shoot. The minari in "Minari" was sowed by Chung's father — an almost impossibly poignant bit of set dressing in a film that blooms in the gap between generations. "That wasn't lost on me," Chung chuckles, speaking from Los Angeles. "I think he kind of knew what I was getting at with the film but we were just not talking about it. He wanted to come to the set and

see what we were doing but I kind of said no. We had some friction during production, to be honest, and it didn't go away until I showed him the film and then it kind of alleviated all the tension we had."

"Minari," which A24 is currently streaming with a wider digital release beginning Feb. 25, wasn't a large production. It was made for less than \$10 million. It's modestly registered to the pace of life and the intimate scale of family. But the film, a Plan B production (Brad Pitt is an execu-

tive producer), has steadily gathered force since its premiere at Sundance, where it won the top drama prize.

The Golden Globes spawned a controversy by limiting "Minari" (a deeply American film, with dirt in its fingers, and largely Korean dialogue) to its foreign-language film category. But the movie has racked up awards elsewhere, including a bushel of nominations from the Screen Actors Guild, a reliable Oscar bellwether. And perhaps most importantly, its honest and

authentic rendering of an Asian American family, in an entertainment world so often reliant on stereotype, has resonated meaningfully for many.

But before all that, "Minari" moved the parents of its makers first. At Sundance, Chung, Yeun and producer Christina Oh — all the children of first-generation immigrants from Korea — brought their mothers and fathers to the premiere, putting them up at the same Park City condo complex. Oh could feel her mother during the movie squeezing her arm in delight. When Yeun and his father stood up at the end, they hugged, and sobbed. "I could hear Steven's dad watching the film and getting emotional at times," remembers Chung.

"When I saw the way those two embraced after the screening, it was almost a mirror image to the way my dad and I embraced after I showed him the film. I guess that feeling felt very new to me."

For Yeun, the Seoul-born 37-year-old actor of "Burning" and "The Walking Dead," the film is about that emotion. Yeun's family emigrated when he was 4 and ultimately settled in Michigan. In playing Jacob, Yeun was channeling his own father to see him anew.

"The internal emotional difficulty for me was breaking



This image released by Netflix shows key art for "Operation Varsity Blues," a documentary about the college admissions scandal, premiering March 17. Associated Press

Netflix doc to examine man behind college admissions scandal

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A Netflix documentary will use actor recreations of FBI wiretaps to tell the story of Rick Singer, the man at the center of the college admissions scandal that sent actors Felicity Huffman, Lori Loughlin and several other prominent parents to prison. Netflix announced Monday that "Operation Varsity Blues" will be released on March 17. Named for the FBI operation that exposed the scandal, the documentary will focus not on the convicted

celebrities like Huffman and Loughlin, but on how Singer persuaded them and many other wealthy clients to cheat to get their children into elite colleges. Netflix said in its announcement that the documentary will use "an innovative combination of interviews and narrative recreations of the FBI's wiretapped conversations between Singer and his clients."

The documentary is from filmmakers Chris Smith and Jon Karmen, whose previous credits include Netflix's

Fyre festival documentary and "Tiger King."

Actor Matthew Modine plays Singer, the admitted mastermind of the operation who flipped and started working with investigators, secretly recording his conversations with parents and coaches.

More than 50 people were charged in the scandal that saw parents pay bribes to have someone cheat on their children's entrance exams or pretend their kids were star athletes for sports they didn't play.

Singer pleaded guilty to racketeering conspiracy and several other charges, and is expected to testify at defendants' trials.

He has not been sentenced. □

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Difficulty Level ★★

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2/23

Pastrnak has hat trick, Bruins rout Flyers 7-3 in Lake Tahoe

By The Associated Press

STATELINE, Nev. (AP) —

David Pastrnak had three goals and the Boston Bruins took control by scoring three times in a 1:39 span of the second period to beat the Philadelphia Flyers 7-3 on Sunday in an outdoor game on the shore of Lake Tahoe.

After a delay-filled opening game of the weekend between Colorado and Vegas because of bright sun that made for poor ice conditions, the game Sunday went off with fewer hitches. The Bruins' high level of play matched the picturesque setting with the lake and snow-covered mountains in the background.

Pastrnak scored in the opening minute of the first two periods and then again late in the third to give him his second hat trick in three games against the Flyers this season. Charlie Coyle, Trent Frederic and Nick Ritchie scored in succession late in the second to give Boston five wins in five games this year against Philadelphia.

Charlie McAvoy also scored and Tuukka Rask made 16 saves for Boston. Joel Farabee, Sean Couturier and James van Riems-



Boston Bruins defenseman John Moore, front, races for the puck ahead of Philadelphia Flyers center Kevin Hayes, during the first period of an NHL hockey game in Stateline, Nev., Sunday, Feb. 21, 2021.

dyk scored for the short-handed Flyers, who have six players on the COVID-19 list. Carter Hart allowed six goals on 23 shots in the first two periods and has now given up 20 goals in four losses to Boston this season. With the bright sun out again Sunday, the NHL had moved the game time to 4:30 p.m. PST to avoid the problems that led to a delay of more than eight hours on Saturday between the first and second periods. The start of this game was

delayed about 20 more minutes because there was some glare on the ice from the sun, but the ice was in good shape and the scenic setting that brought the NHL to the shores of Lake Tahoe to host games on a makeshift rink on a golf course was in full bloom. The sun began setting late in the first period over the Sierra Nevada for a breathtaking scene.

Boston Bruins defenseman John Moore, front, races for the puck ahead of Phila-

delphia Flyers center Kevin Hayes, during the first period of an NHL hockey game in Stateline, Nev., Sunday, Feb. 21, 2021.

Associated Press T.J. Oshie scored twice to end a lengthy drought, Alex Ovechkin had a late power-play goal and Washington erased a two-goal deficit to beat New Jersey. Ovechkin scored with 4:04 left, and that turned out to be a necessary insurance goal when Nikita Gusev beat Craig Anderson with

11.9 seconds left. But it was too late for another comeback, and Washington avoided back-to-back losses. After the Devils jumped out to a 2-0 lead, Oshie staved the comeback by scoring on a deflection on the power play in the second period. That ended a nine-game goal drought and Dell's shutout bid on Washington's 23rd shot of the game.

John Carlson tied it midway through the third period, and Oshie beat Dell again on the power play with 8:07 left to put the Capitals ahead. Ovechkin made Washington 3 of 4 on the power play, just his second goal on the man advantage this season.

Andreas Johnsson and Jack Hughes also scored for New Jersey.

SENATORS 3, CANADIENS 2, OT

OTTAWA, Ontario (AP) — Brady Tkachuk scored at 3:30 of overtime to lift Ottawa past Montreal. Drake Batherson and Josh Norris also scored, and Matt Murray made 30 saves. The Senators are last in the NHL at 5-14-1. Corey Perry and Nick Suzuki scored for Montreal, with Perry tying it at 2 with 5:35 left in the third period. □

Osaka back to No. 2; Medvedev No. 3; Karatsev jumps 72 spots

By HOWARD FENDRICH

AP Sports Writer

Naomi Osaka's Australian Open championship moved her up one spot to No. 2 in the WTA rankings Monday, while men's finalist Daniil Medvedev rose to a career-best No. 3 behind winner Novak Djokovic on the ATP list. Jennifer Brady, the 25-year-old American who was the runner-up to Osaka, jumped 11 spots to No. 13, her first time inside the Top 20. Aslan Karatsev's historic run from qualifying to the final four before losing to nine-time Australian Open champion Djokovic allowed him to vault 72 places from 114th to 42nd. He is the first man

in the professional era to reach the semifinals in his debut in the main draw of a major tournament.

Despite winning the past two Grand Slam tournaments she entered, Osaka still trails No. 1 Ash Barty — who lost in the quarterfinals at Melbourne Park — because of the way the tennis tours are calculating what they're calling "frozen" rankings following last season's hiatus caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Essentially, in order for players' rankings not to be hurt if they skipped events as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, the WTA gives credit for someone's best 16 tournaments

since March 2019. Barty took nearly a full year off, for example, but still has her points from winning the 2019 French Open and reaching the semifinals at the 2020 Australian Open. Serena Williams climbed four spots from No. 11 to No. 7 to get back into the Top 10 after making it to the semifinals in Australia a year after losing in the third round there.

She was beaten by Osaka, whose 6-4, 6-3 victory over Brady in the final on Saturday gave her a fourth major championship, all on hard courts: the 2018 and 2010 U.S. Opens, and the 2019 and 2021 Australian Opens. After her previous



Japan's Naomi Osaka kisses the Daphne Akhurst Memorial Cup during a photo shoot at Government House the day after defeating United States Jennifer Brady in the women's singles final at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Sunday, Feb. 21, 2021.

Associated Press

title in Melbourne, Osaka became the first tennis player from Asia to reach No. 1 in the women's or men's rankings. She was born in Japan to a Japanese mother and Haitian father; they moved to the

United States when Osaka was 3. Osaka now swaps places with Simona Halep, who goes from No. 2 to No. 3 after losing to Williams in the quarterfinals.

Continued on Page 16

Funny on social media, Max Homa takes his golf seriously

By DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Leave it to Max Homa to be so brutally honest that it easily passes as humor, even when he's the subject. Homa set the stage for the greatest moment of his career on Sunday at the Genesis Invitational. He was tied for the lead at Riviera, his favorite golf course in the world. The storied clubhouse was high on a hill over the 18th green, looking magnificent against a blue sky. Tiger Woods, the tournament host, was watching and waiting to present the trophy.

Homa sent a sand wedge high and true, and it settled 3 feet from the hole, a winning shot.

Except that he missed the putt.

Homa walked up the stairs toward the clubhouse, signed for a 5-under 66 that put him a playoff with Tony Finau and then called his wife, Lacy.

"I said, 'I think I choked a little bit.' And I laughed," Homa said.

This had a happy ending, a true Hollywood finish for someone who grew up 30 miles away and whose father brought him to the tournament since he was a toddler.

He worships Riviera. He idolized the tournament host. He was close to tears, struggling to get out words, after his superb chip from the base of a tree on No. 10 for the first playoff hole and



Max Homa kisses his trophy on the practice green after winning the Genesis Invitational golf tournament at Riviera Country Club, Sunday, Feb. 21, 2021, in the Pacific Palisades area of Los Angeles.

his winning par on the next hole at No. 14.

Except for winning a major — he qualified for the Masters again — it will be tough to beat this. And even a green jacket will face competition from Homa's love affair with Riviera and all things LA.

"I don't know if I could ever do anything cooler in golf than this," Homa said. "Tiger Woods is handing us a trophy — that's a pretty crazy thought. We grew up idolizing him, idolizing Riviera Country Club, idolizing the golf tournament. To get it done, it's almost shocking. It feels like it just can't be topped for me."

Lost in this storybook finish is

the kind of golf it required and the work that goes into it.

Even with a victory at Quail Hollow two years ago — Tommy Lasorda called to congratulate him — Homa was best known for his wit on social media, especially a series of roasts to anyone who wanted him to critique the golf swing.

Most of them were recreational players, and there was no mercy. "Trust ur gut," he replied to one who sent a video of his game and said he was prepared to quit.

The roasts even included Justin Thomas, who asked Homa for his thoughts while swinging left-handed.

As for his golf? He was a 30-year-old former NCAA champion from Cal who fell into such a slump that he missed 70 cuts during a five-year stretch.

The message Homa delivered during the West Coast Swing, capped off by his victory at Riviera, was that he takes his golf seriously. And that starts with not taking himself too seriously, which is harder than it might seem.

He has worked tirelessly on what he calls "mental growth," filling his head space with positive affirmation. His wife and others around him have been a big help, and Lacy delivered the goods on Sunday.

Associated Press

The main bullet point: Forgive quickly.

"She would give some really dumb advice every day before I play — they were very random," he said. "Sometimes they're somewhat wise, but they're just out of left field, whatever she could think of. So it was kind of ironic that's the one she came up with."

He quickly forgave himself the missed putt for the win. Why not? He had gone the final 24 holes without a bogey at Riviera. There was nothing wrong with his game.

When he walked to the left of the 10th green in a playoff and saw his ball next to a tree, he didn't pitch a fit. "What are you going to be mad about when you make a good swing when you're nervous?" he said.

"Obviously had a weird-looking shot but I had a shot, which is cool."

He hooded a gap wedge to start as far left as he could toward the front edge of the green, hit it with top spin knowing that the kikuyu grass can be sticky going up the slope. It was a great shot. He made par and got a reprieve when Finau missed a 7-foot putt for the win.

One hole later, it was over. Finau went left into the bunker. Homa hit one of the best shots all day on the par-3 14th for a look at birdie, a certain par. He narrowly missed and won when Finau missed his 10-footer for par. □

Osaka back to No. 2; Medvedev No. 3; Karatsev jumps 72 spots

Continued from Page 15

Aryna Sabalenka now leads the WTA doubles rankings after pairing with Elise Mertens to win the Australian Open women's doubles title. Sabalenka is No. 8 in singles, making her the first woman to be No. 1 in doubles and in the Top 10 in singles since Sara Errani in February 2014.

After beating Medvedev 7-5, 6-2, 6-2 on Sunday for his 18th Grand Slam title, Djokovic is assured of remaining at No. 1 at least another two weeks, which will raise his career total in that spot to 311. That means he will break Roger Federer's ATP record of 310 weeks atop the rankings.

Rafael Nadal stayed at No. 2 after losing in the

quarterfinals, while Medvedev's second appearance in a Grand Slam final pushed him up one spot. Medvedev trades places with Dominic Thiem, who dropped to No. 4 after losing in the fourth round.

There were no other changes in the men's Top 10, including Roger Federer remaining at No. 5 despite not having competed in more than a year after having two knee operations. He is expected to return to the tour next month.

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